



This material has been provided by Asbury Theological Seminary in good faith of following ethical procedures in its production and end use.

The Copyright law of the united States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyright material. Under certain condition specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to finish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *“used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.”* If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

Contact

B.L. Fisher Library
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 N. Lexington Ave.
Wilmore, KY 40390

B.L. Fisher Library’s Digital Content
place.asburyseminary.edu



Asbury Theological Seminary
205 North Lexington Avenue
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

800.2ASBURY
asburyseminary.edu

**A STUDY OF THE METHODIST
YOUTH MOVEMENT**

**A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Christian Education
Asbury Theological Seminary**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education**

**by
Troy Rolison
August 1957**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED	1
The Problem	1
Statement of the problem	1
Importance of Study	1
Definitions of Terms Used	1
Holy Club	1
Chautauqua Movement	2
The Unified Plan	2
The Correlated Plan	2
II. THE BACKGROUND OF THE YOUTH MOVEMENT	3
Early Historians	3
The Sunday School Movement	4
Young Men's Christian Association	5
Christian Endeavor	9
Early Methodist Societies	12
Young People's Methodist Alliance	12
The Oxford League	16
Young People's Christian Alliance	20
The Methodist Young People's Union	21
Methodist Episcopal Alliance	22
III. THE EPWORTH LEAGUE	23
Need For Organization	23
Founding the Epworth League	24

CHAPTER

PAGE

The Colors	31
The Badge	31
The Motto	31
Sentiments of the League	31
First Meeting of the Board of Control	32
Local Constitution	34
The Organ	37
Organization of Chapters	38
The League Calendar	39
Quiet Hour Covenant	39
Epworth Era Day	40
Fellowship Week	40
Anniversary Day	40
Education Day	40
Mission Study Rally	40
Bible Study Day	41
Changes That The Years Brought	41
The Epworth Wheel	41
The Pledge	41
Some Results	41
Missionary Outreach	41
The League Overseas	41
Flexibility of the League	42

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. THE METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP	43
Founding the Fellowship	43
The Emblem and Colors	44
The Motto	44
The Covenant	44
The Intermediate Department	44
The Church Program	46
Qualifications For Leaders	47
Leaders	47
Organization	48
Membership	49
The Senior and Young People's Department	49
Plan I	50
Plan II	50
The Four Commissions	51
Worship and Evangelism	51
Christian Witness	52
World Friendship	52
Community Service	53
Times of Worship	54
Beyond the Local Church	55
Seniors	56
Older Youth	56
Subdistrict	56

CHAPTER	PAGE
District	57
Annual Conference	57
The Jurisdiction	58
The National Conference	58
The Joint Staff	59
On the College Campus	59
V. A COMPARATIVE STUDY	62
VI. CONCLUSION	67

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1889 the Methodist Church for the first time formed an organization of all Methodist youth. There had been many officially recognized societies, but each ministered only to the youth in its area. Need was felt for a society that would draw the young people together as a body.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to: (1) briefly study the youth movements preceding the Methodist Youth movement, (2) study more closely the Epworth League and the Methodist Youth Fellowship, (3) make a comparative study of these organizations in regard to aims.

Importance of the study. The youth of the church today will be the leaders of the church of tomorrow. The Methodist Church realized this and attempts have been made to prepare youth for this great task. This study deals with these efforts and their outcome.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The Holy Club. The Holy Club was the name given the religious group at Oxford University of which Charles and John Wesley were members. It was also given the name "Method-

ist."

Chautauqua Movement. This movement was an influential and characteristically American development in adult education. It originated in 1874 with the first Chautauqua assembly, held on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in the southwest corner of New York state. It was instituted for the purpose of training Sunday school teachers. Dr. Vincent, the founder expected training classes in the local church to become universal. While many were established the teacher training movement eventually and largely assumed the form of teachers' meetings for the study of next Sunday's International Uniform Lesson.

The Unified Plan. The unified plan of the Methodist Youth Fellowship controls all activities of youth under one program with one set of officers. The youth belong to the Fellowship as a whole and not to separate departments or agencies. This is also referred to as Plan 1 in the Methodist Discipline.

Correlated Plan. Under the correlated plan of the Methodist Fellowship, membership is maintained in separate departments and agencies which have their own set of officers and programs. All departments are correlated to meet the goals set up by the Council.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells in his writings that from the days of Moses the young Jews assembled in their synagogues every Sabbath, not only to hear the law but to learn it correctly. This instruction of the young was so thorough, that, as Josephus expressed it, "If any one of us should be questioned concerning the law, he could more easily give all of them than his own name."¹ Philo also wrote that the synagogue was a "real house of learning" and through them the Jews were instructed in the law from early youth. The teacher listened while the pupil questioned.²

This may have been the Bible school system among the Jews in Palestine at the time of Christ's birth. Similar schools were carried on in the early church; and it is generally acknowledged that the successful propagation of the apostolic witness was largely due to the faithful adherence of its successors to the divinely approached plan of child-rearing and child-teaching. "The Apostolic church," says Barron Brunsen, "made the school the connecting link between

¹ Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School in Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1944) pp. 13-14.

² Ibid.

itself and the world."³ The neglect of the schools by the church was partly responsible for the dark ages. The Reformation was a return to the teaching principle as well as the teaching material of the Apostles. The catechisms, which characterized the separation from the church of Rome, were prepared primarily for the teaching ministry. In an attempt to stop the triumphant progress of Protestantism, the counter catholic educational movement of the Jesuits, was only a return to the Apostolic school idea.⁴

In this chapter will be pointed out how other educational and religious movements went before and influenced the Youth movement of the Methodist church. These movements will not be dealt with in detail.

One of the most important movements for young people was of course the Sunday school movement, started by Robert Raikes in the 18th century, for the purpose of reaching the children of the street. Many church people opposed the Sunday school and felt that it was sacrilegious for these schools to operate on the Sabbath.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church was closely identified with the movement. While most of the clergymen this day were either hostile or indifferent to the movement, Wesley directed his preachers to form societies

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

within the congregations where there were ten or more children.⁵

In 1790 the Methodist conference in Charleston, South Carolina, gave recognition to the Sunday school by the following resolution:

Let us labor as the heart and soul of one man to establish Sunday schools in or near the place of public worship. Let persons be appointed by bishops to teach all that will attend, and have capacity to learn, from six o'clock in the morning until ten, and from two in the afternoon until six, where it does not interfere with public worship. Be it further resolved that the council should compile a proper school book to teach them learning and piety.⁶

The success of the Sunday School was largely due to its provision of secular as well as religious instruction by means of volunteer teachers.⁷

THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

In 1851, in Boston, Massachusetts, Captain Thomas V. Sullivan a fifty-one year old sea captain, who had retired at the age of thirty-six to devote himself to religious work among seamen, organized the Young Men's Christian Association in the United States.

For a number of years he had served as chaplain for the American Bethel Society, working among sailors on the Great Lakes. In 1847 he established himself as Marine missionary at large for the port of Boston. In that capacity

⁵ Clarence H. Benson, History of Christian Education (Moody Press, 1943) pp. 125-26.

⁶ Ibid., p. 132.

⁷ Ibid., p. 136.

he rallied around himself a group of businessmen who contributed to his support and a group of young men who assisted in his work. They represented various churches of Boston.⁸

Captain Sullivan had no denominational prejudice and his work operated on this basis.

His plans for founding the Young Men's Christian Association came after reading an article in the Baptist Watchman and Reflector describing the Young Men's Christian Association in London, organized seven years before.⁹

The founder of London Young Men's Christian Association was George Williams, later Sir George Williams. He moved to London in 1841 and became an employee in a dry good's establishment of which he became the proprietor. At that time there were some eighty young men employed in the different departments of the business. Through Williams' efforts a Young Men's Christian Association was organized for the purpose of establishing religious services and Bible classes among the young men employed in London. The organization took place June 6, 1844.

The Association was marked by intense religious zeal. Through personal interviews by its members, there was a persistent campaign to win young men to lead a religious

⁸ Samuel Wirth Wiley, History of Y.M.C.A. Church Relations in the United States (New York: Association Press, 1944) p. 1.

⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

life.¹⁰

The Boston society laid great emphasis upon the Association as a social center. The London Association allowed Christians or non-Christians, church member or non-church member to be members but only the members of an evangelical church could be a voter or office holder.¹¹

Through the efforts of Chauncey M. Longdon, a government employee in Washington and later a clergyman in the Episcopal Church, a Convention of the American Associations was called at Buffalo in June 1854. This convention established an Alliance of the Associations of the United States and Canada under the supervision of an executive committee, which was instructed to call annual conventions. The organization was also made an international one.

There was a convention held in Paris, France in 1855, at which the Paris Basis was adopted. This has become the Apostle's Creed of the Association, and did much to unify the movement. The Basis read:

The Young Men's Christian Association seeks to unite these young men, who regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciple in their doctrine and in their life, and

¹⁰ Owen E. Pence, "Period I, 1844 to 1855, Founding of the Young Men's Christian Association," The Encyclopedia Americana, 1955, Vol. 29) pp. 653-654.

¹¹ Ibid.

to associate their efforts for the extension of His kingdom among young men.¹²

In 1885 at Springfield, Massachusetts, a school was established for the training of general secretaries for the Young Men's Christian Association. A year later a physical training department was added for the training of physical directors.

In religious education the chief emphasis was placed upon the Bible classes, but there was an increasing diversity of program which later evolved into a department of religious education.

An important phase of the religious work of the association was the interest in foreign missions, which it had aroused among young men.

For many years the work of the association was limited to young men between sixteen and seventeen years of age and upward. The first boys department was organized in 1869. This work has come to be known as the Hi-Y Club.

During war years the Association has worked with the government in home and overseas programs for service men.

In the earliest years, a good many pastors feared that the Association might attempt to take the place of the church, or to become another church. The criticism of the Association, after the first world war, brought the church to its defense.

¹² Ibid., p. 654.

This led to more cooperation.

After the war came the Fundamentalist-Modernist division. Controversy sprang up everywhere. Reaction against liberalism made it hard for many Associations to please the church with their religious teachings; indeed they found it impossible to engage in any definite religious work without offending some part of their church constituency. Thus while the International Committee leaned strongly toward a liberal position in its selection of speakers and in publications, and hence came the suspicion of the conservatives local Associations sought to keep out of the controversy.¹³

The Sunday afternoon religious services were generally discontinued. Bible classes, even among boys, were relaxed. Today the Young Men's Christian Association has become social and athletic centered and does not place the emphasis upon the spiritual as in the beginning.¹⁴

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR

The United Society of Christian Endeavor originated in Portland, Maine, in 1881. The first society was formed by Dr. Francis E. Clark, on the second day of February, in the Williston Church. There were about fifty young people present boys and girls, as well as young men and women. The real beginning was at a prayer meeting held in the Clark home prior to the meeting in the church. The object of the society was

¹³ Wiley, op. cit., pp. 121-123.

¹⁴ Ibid.

to help the boys and girls to be Christians and to train them to work for Christ.¹⁵

In 1882 the first Christian Endeavor Convention was held in Williston Church, Portland. By this time there were about twenty societies in different parts of the country. By 1885 the society had spread to seven foreign countries.¹⁶

The constitution of Christian Endeavor provided for three types of members: active, associate and affiliated or honorary members. The active members were those who professed to be Christians. They held the voting power. Associate members were those who did not consider themselves as Christians. They were excused from the prayer meetings. Affiliated or honorary members were the older Christians who desired to remain as part of the society. This group was to be looked to for financial and moral support.¹⁷

Christian education is not merely the acquisition, but the use of knowledge. In fact the educational program involves the four steps of acquisition, assimilation, appropriation, and application of knowledge. But the Sunday school, largely because of the absence of trained teachers, had contented itself with instructing and drilling its pupils.

¹⁵ Francis E. Clark, Training the Church of the Future (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1902) p. 169.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 182.

Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull recognized this outstanding omission in the Sunday school program, when in his Yale lectures on the Sunday School in 1888, he said:

Our Lord in training His band of apostles first enlisted them as followers; then he instructed them in the principles and methods of service to which they were called; after this he sent them out to practice in the line of His instruction to them. This was and is the one true method in right training, and of course, it was adopted by our Lord in His work.

The threefold work of winning, of informing and of exercising - of enlistment, of instruction, and of drill - proceed, wherever the training process is made practical, to the completion of the religious life of disciples of Christ, today. The first factor in this work, we may say, is represented by the pulpit; the second by the Sunday school; the third, by those auxiliary agencies which for lack of a better name may be counted as the gymnasias of the church in which the young membership is to have practice in moral and athletics.¹⁸

Trumbull, in speaking of an auxiliary agency to supply the training that completes religious education, undoubtedly had in mind the Christian Endeavor movement.

Clark proposed a simple plan of a self-managed organization for young people that would provide instruction and worship, but also give opportunity for expression.

The United Society of Christian Endeavor Society must be recognized as one of the great movements in religious education. As there were few if any of its constituents who were not enrolled at some time in the Sunday school, it is doubtful if it would ever have attained such signal success

¹⁸ Benson, op. cit., p. 205.

without the existence of the older agency. Clark only added an essential superstructure to the foundational work of Robert Raikes.¹⁹

METHODIST SOCIETIES

In 1889 five of the then existent Methodist youth groups sent their delegates to Cleveland, Ohio, to work out plans for one strong organization. They realized that in spite of all the attempts of the church to meet the needs of the young people, the church was failing in her effort. These five groups with their delegation were:

1. The Young People's Methodist Alliance was represented by: Reverend Henry Date, M. D. Carrol, S. A. Keen, S. W. Heald, W. L. Cogshall and Willis W. Cooper.

2. The Oxford League, represented by J. L. Hurlbut, J. M. Freeman, R. R. Deherty, J. Embury Price, James L. Doehing, Mrs. Byron E. Hilman.

3. The Christian League, represented by Willis I. Haven, Willis P. Odell and C. A. Littlefield.

4. The Methodist Young People's Union was represented by W. W. Washburn, Charles H. Morgan, Samuel Plantz, Frederick A. Smart, James E. Jacklin, and Claudius B. Spencer.

5. Young People's Methodist Episcopal Alliance was represented by Reverend J. S. Reager, G. A. Reeder, Jr., B. J. Mills, Orlando Bagdley, and L. K. Warner.²⁰

1. YOUNG PEOPLE'S METHODIST ALLIANCE

The Young People's Methodist Alliance had come into

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 206.

²⁰ Joseph F. Berry, Four Wonderful Years (Hunt and Eaton: New York, 1893) pp. 29-30.

existence on August 25, 1883. It was born out of the Desplaines Camp Meeting at Desplaines, Illinois, near Chicago.

Dr. and Mrs. Asbury Lowery, of New York, visited the camp and preached the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification until hundreds became interested. Many young people sought a fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit, and a more complete consecration. The light came clearly. Prejudices melted. Hunger and thirst increased. The filling time came.

One day two young women, Winnie I. Benjamin and Lillian E. Date met by appointment under a certain tree for prayer and conversation. The next day a larger group gathered. The circle widened until, on August 21, there were twenty young people in attendance. John E. Farmer, a student of Garrett Biblical Institute, led the services. No language could express the glow of that hour. The little group of twenty was about to turn back to the camp to attend the preaching service, when Frank McCluney, then a young Chicago bookkeeper and later a pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church, proposed that they should all sign a common covenant. Henry Date proposed a permanent young people's society, that should aim to keep alive and spread the holy enthusiasm of the hour.

In the mind of Date the plan was simply for a fellowship, whose members should keep each other in mind during the interim between the summer meetings. A committee was appointed

to draft a constitution for the proposed society. Four days later in the Evanston church cottage the alliance came into existence with a membership of nearly thirty. This number increased to eighty before the camp meeting was over. The first president was Henry Date.

CONSTITUTION AND AIM

In August 1885, the constitution was remodeled and made national in its scope. Provision was made for a monthly paper, a special course of reading, a daily study of the Bible, and the foundation of local alliances in the churches. It was the aim of the growing movement to promote loyal cooperation with the pastors, daily Bible study, avoidance of questionable amusements, holy living, and thoughtful enthusiasm, and to lend a hand in keeping the young people in close sympathy with the usage, sacrifices, and experiences that had made the last century of Methodism mighty for God. The standard lifted was as high as that required of a candidate for ministerial orders. All active members were required to sign a pledge which read:

I enjoy or will seek the blessing of heart purity as taught in the Scriptures. I promise to abstain from the use of tobacco and of all intoxicants as a beverage, to refrain from card-playing and dancing, and from attending the theater, the opera, the circus, and all other questionable places of amusement. I agree to have stated seasons of private prayer, to pray for my pastor and for members of the Young People's Methodist Alliance, to study the Bible each day, and to give daily thought to the winning of souls, by personal conversation, letter

writing, tract distribution, prayer, or other means.²¹

THE PLEDGE

The pledge was not required of associate members. Three mottoes were used by the society: 1. "Holiness unto the Lord" - Bible. 2. "We live to make our church a power in the land, while we live to love every other church that exalts our Christ" - Bishop Simpson. 3. "All for Jesus." - Mary D. James.

THE BADGE

The badge everywhere worn was a narrow white ribbon with a scarlet thread. The ribbon was put on when the pledge was signed and was the insignia of a consecration made and a covenant taken.²²

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The first international convention of Methodist young people the world ever witnessed was held under the auspices of the alliance at Chicago in September, 1888. In the nine months that followed three hundred new societies were enrolled. It was estimated that over one thousand persons were converted in meetings held by the Alliance.

At its National Convention in Indianapolis, July 5, 1889, the Young People's Methodist Alliance endorsed the action

²¹ Ibid., p. 10.

²² Ibid.

of the Cleveland Conference, adopted the constitution of the Epworth League, and voted itself out of existence. It was at the crest of its success, with four hundred and ten local societies and nearly seventeen hundred members that its identity was lost by a voluntary act, and proof was given that love for the church was supreme.

II. THE OXFORD LEAGUE

The prime mover in the organization and development of the Oxford League was Dr. John H. Vincent. The General Conference of 1876 made provision for the Lyceum, an association for literary improvement, but it was found that this did not meet the needs of young people. Dr. Vincent purposed a plan for a society that should provide for symmetrical, spiritual, and intellectual culture. This society was called the "Oxford League" after the famous English University in which the "Holy Club" was founded.

The new organization was received with favor by many pastors and leading laymen. The Oxford League had for its objects:

1. The commemoration of the meetings of certain students at Oxford, England, between 1729 and 1737, principally under the leadership of John and Charles Wesley, from which meetings were developed the great religious awakening and revivals of the last century by which the doctrine and spirit of the apostles were again given in their fullness to

the world and the power of the primitive church once more established.²³

2. The furtherance of the four-fold objects of the original Oxford Club: (1) The more careful and devout study of the Holy Scriptures; (2) The cultivation of purer and nobler personal Christian character; (3) The study of the Christian classics for literary culture; (4) The devising of methods of doing good to others.²⁴

The Oxford League aimed, in the fuller development of this scheme, to encourage Methodist youth, 1. To study the Holy Scriptures with a view to the promotion of personal piety; 2. To become familiar with the Bible origin of the doctrines, spirit, and methods which characterize their own church; 3. To trace the presence and development of the Methodist force in the Holy Catholic Church, from the days of the Apostles to the present time; 4. To trace the origin of the modern, evangelical, and apostolic revival, known as "Methodism" - "Christianity in earnest" - in the rectory of Epworth, the halls of Oxford, and in the concretated homes of the best English society, and to promote a just appreciation of the strength, scholarship, and dignity of the Methodist movement; 5. To promote personal consecration to practical work, carrying the Gospel in personal service to the most needy and most degraded, to the godless poor and to

²³ Ibid., p. 13.

²⁴ Ibid.

the godless rich, reaching to the bedridden and the blind, visiting the sick room, the hospital, and the prison, looking after new families coming into the communities and inviting children and adults to the Sunday school and the public service, studying the various benevolences of the church, and thus cultivating intelligent enthusiasm in the entire work of the church; 6. To promote intellectual training under the auspices of the church through church lyceums or other church organizations, especially among those who no longer attend school, and thus develop a rational and refined Christian social life, in which people may find inspiration and people of limited opportunities be brought into gentle enabling and sanctifying fellowship and thus practically endorsed the official deliverances of all Christian churches in their councils, conventions, conferences, and assemblies against irrational and hurtful amusements; 7. To further these various ends by the publication and circulation of the permanent documents devoted to the history, philosophy, doctrines, institutions and achievements of Methodism.²⁵

The Oxford League was denominational - a thoroughly Methodist movement designed to build up Methodism, that Methodism might more effectively work in building up the cause of Christ everywhere.

²⁵ Ibid.

AIM

The character of the Lyceums, the name Oxford and the possible influence of the Chautauqua movement combined to produce the impression the Oxford League was designed chiefly for literary and social culture. This was altogether erroneous. The League was specifically religious in its aim. It proposed to promote spiritual life by more Bible study, to broaden the Christian horizon by a larger culture in the world of thought and expression, and to deepen vital piety by devotional services and tender ministry in Christly work. It steadfastly strove for the symmetrical development of the whole man. In a word the Oxford League claimed the consecration of every faculty and every opportunity to the service of Christ.

SUCCESS OF THE MOVEMENT

The League lifted a lofty standard and inspiration was given to the church for a forward movement. About five hundred chapters were established in sixty days when the hour of midnight struck at Cleveland. May 15, 1889 the Epworth League was born and the Oxford League folded its banner and loyally laid its pledges of fealty and devotion at the feet of this latest born child of promise.²⁶

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

III. YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHRISTIAN LEAGUE

J. H. Twombly was the originator of the Young People's Christian League. Early in 1887, Dr. Twombly presented a resolution to the Boston Methodist's Preachers' Meeting concerning the welfare of the young people of Methodism and calling for a convention of young people of New England. In response to this resolution a mass convention was held in first church, Boston, October 26, 1887. About three hundred and fifty young people were present, representing about one hundred New England churches. The first president of this League was W. I. Haven.

AIM

The League was started with broader plans than any society then existing in the church. The Young People's Methodist Alliance at that time had only one class of members, and the Oxford League required a uniform constitution. None of these societies were able to bring together the already existing societies which were in many of the Methodist churches. The Young People's Christian League aimed to unify the interests of these older societies, lyceums, guilds, bands, etc., with their local histories and associations, by making them auxiliary to a central body without requiring any change of name or constitution or method of work, wherever these were acceptable to their local church.²⁷

²⁷ Joseph F. Berry, Four Wonderful Years (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1893) p. 19.

CONSTITUTION

Very soon it was discovered that there were a good many churches without any young people's societies; so a committee prepared some suggestions for a constitution for such church groups. These required allegiance to local church to secure relation to the central body and not uniformity of organization. The organization was very democratic, the officers and board of management being chosen by the delegates from the auxiliaries present in annual conventions.

SUCCESS

The achievements of the Christian League during its brief career were inspiring, if not numerous. The League accomplished much through leaflets, news letters, etc. With its devotional, denominational, literary and social, visitation, temperance, mission, and finance departments, it attempted to carry out the spirit of the motto, "Look up and lift up."

IV. THE METHODIST YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNION

This organization was the outcome of a meeting of alert Detroit conference pastors. For some time they had been impressed that the time had come for the formation of a society for the social and religious culture of their young people - a society better fitted for this high purpose than any of the others already in existence. The matter was first

broached in November, 1887, at a session of the Detroit Methodist Ministers' Meeting.

A call was issued and the convention assembled on December 19 and 20, 1887, in Central Methodist Episcopal Church, Detroit, Michigan. Delegates from more than fifty churches and young people's societies attended. As a result of this convention the Young People's Society of Detroit Conference was formed. A comprehensive constitution was adopted, many features of which were later incorporated in the Epworth League. One year of trial and success convinced the managers of the society that there was something in the movement worth giving to the world. Consequently in 1888 the constitution was so revised as to provide for a more general organization, under the name of Methodist Young People's Union. But the managers of this society too, were seeking larger union.

V. METHODIST EPISCOPAL ALLIANCE

The fifth of the "original societies" was but an infant when the consolidation took place. The organizers doubtless hoped that they had found the solution to the problem that was vexing the leaders of the younger host of Methodist. This conference hoped to unite the Methodist Episcopal societies of young people into one great connectional society. The conference was held in Ashland, Ohio in September, 1888. Since the purpose of the Methodist Episcopal Alliance was realized in the Epworth League they unanimously adopted the constitution of that plan of union.

CHAPTER III

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

The Epworth League grew out of the union of smaller youth organizations of the Methodist church. In a sense these organizations did not die, but incorporated themselves into one large church group for the good of Methodist youth.

A. THE NEED FOR ORGANIZATION

Even before the birth of the Young People's Methodist Alliance, which was the oldest of the five societies uniting to found the Epworth League, church people had been trying to establish a program to reach youth. Each organization had failed to accomplish what was believed by many people that it should accomplish. So organization after organization came into existence in attempts to meet the needs of the church.

Until 1889 the Methodist Church did not have an organization for youth supported by all of Methodism. Though there were officially recognized organizations yet there was not an organization which demanded the loyalty of all Methodist youth.

Denominational leaders realized the need for an organization in which the ideas of the smaller organization would be incorporated and which would summon the loyalty of all Methodist young people.

B. FOUNDED THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

After many months of planning and prayer the meeting at Cleveland, Ohio, was called. On May 14, 1889 the delegates assembled in the Central Methodist Church for one of Methodism's greatest occasions.

The Conference was called to order by Willis W. Cooper, who was chosen as temporary chairman, and A. H. Gillet was chosen temporary secretary.

The committee on permanent organization was appointed and it was not long in selecting officers. Cooper was elected chairman and Claudius B. Spencer secretary. It was agreed that the voting be done by delegations and that each delegation have a right to six votes.¹

In order to secure a full and frank expression of opinion from the delegates upon the important issue which had brought them together, it was decided that a representative of each society should speak for ten minutes, suggesting if possible, some basis for union. After a brief recess for consultation Henry Date spoke for the Methodist Alliance and offered a basis for the hoped for consolidation: 1. A uniform constitution; 2. Self government under a general board; 3. A strong spiritual element. The Oxford League was represented by Robert H. Doherty, its recording secretary. He was

¹ Joseph F. Berry, Four Wonderful Years (New York: Hunt and Eaton, Cincinnati: Cranston and Curtis, 1893) pp. 30-31.

unable, however, at that time to make suggestions for the proposed union. W. I. Haven was spokesman for the Young People's Christian League. He recommended that: 1. The publishing interests be centered in New York; 2. That the general organization be centered in New York; 3. That the secretary of the Sunday school union be the general secretary; 4. That General Conference district organizations be to a large degree autonomous, each district to elect two delegates to a convention which should be held quadrennially at the seat of the General Conference; 5. A local constitution with pledge and without pledge; 6. A Board of Control to consist of delegates from each of the districts, a number of bishops and others. Washburn expressed the wishes of the Young People's Union and suggested these planks for the union platform: 1. A pledge, but not to be insisted upon for all; 2. A paper; 3. A general organization similar in plan to that outlined by the representative of the Christian League; 4. A strong spiritual element. Speaking for the North Ohio Conference, J. S. Reager said they were ready to make any proper concession for union. Before adjournment it was clear that while the desire for a united society was strong, very serious obstacles were in the way of its realization.²

When the delegates reassembled in the afternoon, W. I. Haven led in prayer, asking earnestly for divine guidance and

² Ibid., pp. 31-32.

help. After a brief conference with his colleagues Hurlbut made the proposition for a united society with: 1. A strong spiritual foundation; 2. A local society to be organized under the authority of the local church; 3. The general organization to be managed by a Board of Control, chosen like the other general officers of the church, by the General Conference, but upon nomination by the Bishops.³

All the societies having submitted a basis of union, a committee on consolidation was appointed. This committee soon presented a model general constitution for the consolidated societies. It embraced many of the features of what eventually became the general constitution of the Epworth League.

The committee of one from each society which had been appointed during the afternoon to confer about the publication asked permission to report. Its recommendation was that Our Youth, a paper already in existence, be modified so as to give more prominence to the religious and social features of the proposed united society. Then the conference adjourned till morning.

Wednesday morning, May 15, found the little company again assembled in the classroom of Central Church. A half hour was spent in prayer. One of the most influential movements in the history of Methodism was about to take organic

³ Ibid.

form. How important that the Head of the Church should be present to guide and control the deliberations of the conference upon this historic day.

First in order was the consideration of reports which had been laid upon the table at the previous session. Those on consolidation and general organization were considered first. The discussion was fraternal and free, and with slight amendments, both the documents were approved.

Next came the discussion and selection of a name. The committee recommended that:

While we agree that the retention of the name of each society here represented would probably conduce to the strength of that society for the time being, we have felt that, nevertheless, the interests of the work at large should only be consulted and that those interests may be subserved by mutual concession.

We are in practical agreement that we can select no better noun than League. As to the adjective we are not agreed. The majority of your committee favors The Wesley League; one votes for the Oxford League, and one for the Christian League.

We make this tentative report as the completest we can now reach, and reserve our individual rights on the final vote.⁴

The vote showed that the problem had been thoroughly discussed by the committee. When open to the conference motions, amendments, and substitutions followed each other in rapid succession. Agreement seemed to be impossible. Finally it was decided to go into committee of the whole. But the hour

⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

of adjournment was at hand and the committee postponed further considerations till afternoon.

The devotional meeting with which the afternoon session opened could never have been forgotten by those who were present. Most of the delegates participated. The attitude of the little company was one of entire consecration, and their petition was for guidance in the important steps they were trying to take. Then the perplexing question of a name was taken up again. Some new combinations of words were proposed. Finally an informal ballot was agreed upon. The results: The Wesley League, twelve votes; The Epworth League, nine; The Oxford League, eight; The Young People's League of the Methodist Episcopal Church, one.⁵ This vote, it will be remembered was taken in the committee of the whole. When it was announced Hurlbut moved that the committee rise and report the name Wesley League to the conference. Some of the delegates were eager to substitute the name Oxford for Wesley. The name Wesley League was temporarily adopted.

Then followed a careful examination of the report of the committee on local constitution. The plan in brief, contemplated a society having active and associate membership with a pledge for each class. The officers were to consist of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and the chairman of standing committees; these officers, with the

⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

pastor, to form a board of managers. The following standing committees were proposed: Devotional, Denominational, Literary, Social Work, Visitation, and Finance. A footnote stated that the pledge for active members was recommended for general adoption, but if in any church this pledge should be found an obstacle to the formation of the League the members might adopt the associate members' pledge.⁶

The Conference went into committee of the whole to consider the proposed local constitution. Time was rapidly slipping away, so the speeches were limited to three minutes each. After all animated debate, pending a decision a recess of ten minutes was taken by the request of the representatives of the Oxford League.

A bomb was thrown into the afternoon gathering, by a frank and courteous communication, from the Oxford League Delegates. This letter informed the conference that the Oxford League would not surrender its name and constitution to the one proposed by the conference. The letter further informed the conference that unification was still the earnest desire of their group, but under the circumstances they would have to retire from the conference.⁷

The delegates of the Oxford League then withdrew from

⁶ Joseph F. Berry, Four Wonderful Years (New York: Hunt and Eaton, Cincinnati: Cranston and Curtis, 1893) p. 36.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

the room. When the conference recovered from its surprise a motion was made and carried to spread the communication just received upon the journal. L. K. Warner and B. J. Mills, of the North Ohio Conference Alliance, asked to be excused from the conference because of sympathy with the representatives of the Oxford League.

All knew that a moment of crisis had come. Once again the group betook themselves to prayer for guidance. As they prayed the answer came. Everyone felt the divine presence. W. I. Haven, with tears rolling down his face, said, "I am willing to concede anything, even the name: we must not leave this place without securing the ends for which we came - union."⁸

A committee was appointed to wait upon the Oxford League and invite them to return to the conference. This committee was instructed to say that the conference was willing to consider the local constitution of the Oxford League.

The Oxford delegates returned to the room, and W. I. Haven reported that the committee had visited the Oxford League and Hurlbut would report the attitude of the League. The conference gave the report careful consideration and it was agreed that the Oxford delegates again take their seats

⁸ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

in the assembly. Upon motion the union of the five societies was effected.

The local constitution of the Oxford League was then read and the modifications suggested by the conference were noted by Dr. Hurlbut.

The conference went immediately into adoption of other matters.

The Colors - Upon motion by Hurlbut, the white ribbon with a scarlet thread running through the center from end to end, which had been the badge of the Young People's Methodist Alliance, was chosen as the colors of the new League.

The Badge - It was resolved that the Maltese cross with the initials and motto of the League be adopted as the badge. The Maltese cross had been used as a badge by the Oxford League and the Young People's Christian Alliance.

The Motto - The motto of the Young People's Christian League was selected as the motto of the new organization, "Look up; lift up."⁹

Sentiments of the League were expressed in a sentence used by John Wesley and the motto of the Oxford League: "I desire to form a league, offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Jesus Christ" and "We live to make our church a power in the land, and live to love others who exalt our Christ." - Simpson¹⁰

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 41.

The hour of midnight approached as these final details were arranged. It would have been difficult to have found a happier group of men. "Praise God!" was an exclamation which fell in all sincerity from many lips.

It would be hard to realize today what a thrill this organization was to the young people of Methodism in the nineteenth century. Before the church paper had time to carry official news of the event to their readers, requests began to pour into the temporary office in New York for charters, or for information as to how to organize a chapter. Some pastors, who had been wondering what to do with their young people eagerly accepted this chance to introduce into their congregation a society designed especially for this group. In other of the churches it was the pressure applied by the young people themselves that induced the pastor and official board to permit organization.¹¹

Seven months after organization, charters had been granted to 1,480 chapters.¹²

The Board of Control met for the first time at Chicago on February 6, 1890. The meeting attracted wide attention.

¹¹ Paul Hutchinson, The Story of the Epworth League (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1927), p. 32.

¹² Ibid.

Jessie L. Hurlbut called the meeting to order. A devotional period followed after which the appointment of committees took place as follows: 1. Committees on Constitution of the Board of Control; 2. Committee on Local Chapter Constitution; 3. Committee on Finance; 4. Committee on Literature; and 5. Committee on Relation to other Young People's Societies.¹³

The committee on permanent organization was first to present its report. The constitution with few modifications was accepted.

The next committee to report was that on literature. It insisted that an official paper be published by the League.

The candid utterance of the Board of Control on the relation of the Epworth League to other young people's societies was significant, especially in the light of later developments. The report of the Committee adopted by the Board read:

The Epworth League had its origin in the conviction that the various young people's societies of the church should be united in one organization. Its scheme of work has been made large enough to comprehend all forms of Christian activity. We therefore recommend that all literary, social, and religious societies of young people now in existence in our church merge themselves into the Epworth League and that every such society continue its special work through that department of the League under which it would properly fall.

We cordially recognize the efficient work of the societies of Christian Endeavor and other similar organizations. We disclaim any purpose of antagonism. We seek rather that efficiency that comes in the use of our own church methods. We would join hands with them all in the

¹³ Berry, op. cit., pp. 62-62.

training and leadership of young minds in aggressive work for our one Master. To this end we recommend that our Leagues seek such cooperation with all other Christian societies of young people in systematic visitation of the unchurched and poor, in temperance and other reforms which may require division of labor or united effort.

We recommend the appointment of a fraternal delegate to the Epworth League of the Methodist Church of Canada.

We recommend the appointment of a committee of five which shall seek the appointment of committees from similar societies who shall arrange for an interdenominational conference of young people's societies.¹⁴

In obedience to the recommendations of this committee, W. W. Gosper was chosen fraternal delegate to the Epworth League of Canada, and J. B. Young, Jessie L. Hurlbut and W. W. Young were appointed a committee on an international conference.¹⁵

The report of the Committee on Local Constitutions precipitated a spirited discussion, but the original plan of the Committee was not seriously modified. The constitution for local groups as finally adopted read:

Article I. Name - This organization shall be known as the Epworth League of the _____, Methodist Episcopal Church of _____, and shall be subordinate to the Quarterly Conference of said church, and a chapter of the Epworth League of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Article II. Object - The object of the League is to promote intelligent and loyal piety in young members and friends of the church; to aid them in the attainment of purity of heart and in constant growth in grace, and to train them in works of mercy and help.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Article III. Membership - Members shall be constituted by election of the chapter, on nomination of the president, after approval by the cabinet. 2. The pastor shall be exofficio a member of the chapter and cabinet. 3. Whenever a chapter decides, there shall be two classes of members, active and associate. Active members shall, in addition to election as provided in Section I, subscribe to the following pledge:

I will earnestly seek for myself and do what I can to help others attain, the highest New Testament standard of experience and life. I will abstain from all those forms of worldly amusements forbidden by the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal church, and I will attend, so far as possible, the religious meetings of the chapter, and the church, and take some active part in them.

Active members only shall be eligible to election as officers of the chapter. Associate members shall be entitled to all other privileges of membership.

Article IV. Departments - The work of the League shall be carried on through six departments as follows: 1. Department of Christian Work. 2. Department of Mercy and Help. 3. Department of Literary Work. 4. Department of Entertainment. 5. Department of Correspondence. 6. Department of Finance. The distribution of work under each department shall be as follows: 1. Department of Christian Work; (a) Young people's prayer meetings; (b) spiritual welfare of members; (c) Christian work among the young; (d) Sunday school interests; (e) missionary work; (f) open air meetings; 2. Department of Mercy and Help: (a) Systematic visitation; (b) temperance; (c) tract distribution; (d) Junior League work; (e) home mission work; (f) social purity; (g) employment bureau. 3. Department of Literary Work: (a) Bible study; (b) lectures and literary work; (c) lyceums, libraries, and educational work; (d) church literature; (e) Epworth League readings; (f) C.L.S.C. readings; 4. Department of Entertainment: (a) Reception and introduction of members; (b) social entertainment; (c) music for all meetings; (f) badges and signals. 5. Department of Correspondence: (a) All records; (b) correspondence with central office; (c) correspondence with all absent members; (d) historical and other statistics; (e) record of literary work. 6. Department of Finance: (a) All regular finance; (b) expense of all departments; (c) collection of all dues; (d) raising funds; (e) expenditures.

Article V. Officers - 1. The officers shall be a president, secretary, treasurer, first vice president, second, third and fourth vice presidents. 2. The president, who shall be a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, shall be elected on ballot by a majority vote. The other officers shall be members of the Methodist Episcopal or some other evangelical church, and shall be elected in the same manner. 3. All officers must be approved by the Quarterly Conference or the official board. 4. After approval by the Quarterly Conference or official board the names of the officers, with their addresses, shall be promptly forwarded to the central office of the Epworth League. 5. The officers shall perform the duties usually assigned to such officers. They shall also in the order named, represent and have charge of the Departments of Correspondence, Finance, Christian Work, Mercy and Help, Literary Work, and Entertainment. They shall together with the president, constitute the cabinet of chapter, aiding the president as he may request. 6. For the purpose of enlisting all in the work and rendering it more effective, the cabinet shall assign each member to at least one department of work. Each cabinet officer shall name to the chapter a committee of from three to five members for the management of his department, the officer being "ex officio" chairmen.

Article VI. Meetings - The chapter shall hold a devotional meeting on _____ evening of each week, to be led by one of the members of the chapter under the direction of the Committee on Christian Work. Other meetings may be held as the cabinet may arrange for them.

Article VII. By-laws and amendments - The chapter may adopt such by-laws consistent with the constitution as may be needed. Amendments to constitution or by-laws may be submitted in writing to the cabinet, and when approved by it may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present at any regular meeting.¹⁶

After two days of meeting the Board adjourned to meet again in St. Louis on May 14, 1891

When the Epworth League celebrated its first birthday there were 1,821 chapters enrolled. It seemed unbelievable,

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 68-70.

and the officers did well to caution the members of the board of control against expecting the growth to continue at that rate. "This is the first outburst of youthful enthusiasm" they warned.¹⁷ When the second anniversary came it was found that the League had 5,602 chapters. And the next year the membership increased to 8,102 chapters. After seven years there were 16,302 chapters and this was not the peak of enrollment.

The Organ of The Epworth League. The first meeting of the Board of Control took definite action to see that improvement be made in the youth paper of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The word was given to the Methodist Book Concern to issue a publication that should be of, by, and for the Epworth League. A new weekly was instituted to be published at Chicago.

Joseph F. Berry, who became the most conspicuous figure in the Epworth League movement for more than a decade, was chosen to edit the Epworth Herald. He brought from the campus of Garrett Biblical Institute a young theological student, Stephen J. Herben, who became assistant editor. Subscriptions were to be \$1.50 a year, but to encourage chapter subscriptions en bloc, a rate of one dollar was established for clubs of ten or more, and for eighty cents a year to clubs of twenty-five or more. The paper was to contain sixteen

¹⁷ Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 32.

pages a week.¹⁸

From the day its first issue came from the press The Epworth Herald was not only a journalistic hit, but a sensation. By October of that first year there were 27,000 subscribers; by January, 1891 there were 30,000; by the end of 1891 there were 55,000. Finally the hundred thousand mark was reached, making the largest circulation ever reached, at that time, by a denominational weekly, in the United States.

Age Level of The League. There were three age levels in the Epworth League. The Senior League was composed of young people from eighteen to thirty years of age. The Intermediate league was composed of boys and girls between the ages of 13 to 17.

The Junior league included children from nine to twelve years of age. In connection with the Intermediate league there was provision for the Knights of Ezelah for boys and girls of Epworth, for the girls. Each league had its own constitution and by-laws.

G. The Organization of Chapters. In organization of chapters key men who were sufficiently interested were enlisted to learn all they could about the League. Then when a group was formed they interested others. Literature to supply every person in the conference was provided. Mass

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

meetings were held when the group decided that the time was favorable for organizing the chapter.

First an impressive program was arranged, designed chiefly to convey information in regard to the Epworth League, and names of young people suited to hold office were elected.

Organization followed the principal address, one being chosen for temporary chairman and another for temporary secretary. A vote was then taken as whether to go ahead with organization. If the question was settled in the affirmative, the move was made toward permanent organization.

Immediately after organization the corresponding secretary sent a full account of the organization to the central office in Nashville, Tennessee, to make application for charter.¹⁹

The Charter. The charter set forth the facts and date of the organization of the chapter, giving the official name and number of the particular league, and was signed by the President and General Secretary of the Board. The charter was issued free of charge by the central office and no chapter was officially recognized until it was chartered.²⁰

D. THE LEAGUE CALENDAR

Quiet Hour Covenant. The first Sunday in January was

¹⁹ Helen B. Boulware, Ralph E. Noller, Fitzgerald S. Parker, Epworth League Handbook (Nashville: 1931) pp. 37.

a day of presenting the quiet hour covenant. The whole chapter if possible, was enrolled in the covenant to open at least fifteen minutes a day in devotional Bible reading and prayer.

Epworth Era Day was observed the second Sunday in January, and was the occasion for securing subscriptions and renewals for the League organ.

Fellowship Week began the Sunday preceding Easter, and was partly so named because it was a week of world-wide observance by all Methodist youth, but chiefly because each chapter was to come together each day for prayer service, the theme of each service being appropriate to the corresponding day of our Lord's last week on earth. Each member sought to enter into closer fellowship with Christ.

Anniversary Day was the second Sunday in May, which corresponded as nearly as possible with the date of the birth of the League. This day was to be observed throughout the church by all members. At this service an offering was taken for League extension.

Education Day came early in June and was devoted especially to the cause of Christian education in the church. The program had special reference to the work of the schools and colleges.

Mission Study Rally Day was in October in connection

20 Ibid., p. 38.

with the missionary meeting.

Bible Study Day was the third Sunday in September, and was observed in common with thousands of congregations and societies throughout the United States. This program was for encouraging systematic Bible study.²¹

E. CHANGES THE YEARS BROUGHT

The wheel of the Epworth League which was a carry over from the Oxford League, became known far and wide. Making the wheel go became the purpose of every good officer. The wheel represented the six departments of the League. In 1903, when the departments were rearranged and renamed from six to four departments, the wheel was discarded. In its place appeared the Maltese cross made familiar in the badge.²²

The pledge pretty well stood the test of time, with one change being made in 1913, the wording of the clause concerning amusements being changed to a promise to abstain from such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord.²³

The League adapted itself somewhat to the changing times, but basically it remained the same.

F. SOME RESULTS OF THE LEAGUE

A young woman reader of the Epworth Herald, on her way to the mission field, wrote on ship board to the Herald, that her going to the field had grown out of her work in the Ep-

²¹ Ibid., p. 39.

²² Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 62.

²³ Ibid.

worth League.

By 1927 the Epworth League had a strong foreign missions program, with one chapter in India dating back to the Oxford League, in 1888.

The League put special emphasis on social service, and in every community where there was a chapter, such service was part of the program of the organization.

Culture and Recreation were emphasized as important features of the program. Reading rooms and reading clubs were provided for the public whenever possible.

H. THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE LEAGUE

The league did not insist on a rigid program to be carried on under all circumstances. For this reason it was possible to see two similar groups doing dissimilar things, being of the Epworth League.

CHAPTER IV

THE METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The Methodist Youth Fellowship represents the merger of the youth groups from the Methodist Protestant church, the Methodist Episcopal church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. These three churches were joined at the Uniting Conference of 1939 at Kansas City, Missouri.

The official youth program of the Methodist Episcopal churches, was the Epworth League, organized in 1889 at Cleveland, Ohio.

The official youth program of the Methodist Protestant church was Christian Endeavor, founded in 1881 at Portland, Maine which served as a nondenominational youth program for many denominations.

At the time of the unification of the three Methodist bodies the General Conference gave the General Board the responsibility of bringing together the youth work into a unified program. To accomplish this, the Board of Education set up a youth commission to conduct a careful study and make recommendations for the unified program.

After months of painstaking work, consultation by the staff with youth groups and leaders throughout the nation, a nation-wide meeting of youth and a church-wide poll of all Methodist youth themselves, the decision was made to name the new youth movement "The Methodist Youth Fellowship."

At the time of selecting a name for the new youth organization, the motto, colors, covenant, and benediction, of the new youth fellowship were decided upon.

The Emblem and Colors. The outer design of the emblem is a combination of the Cross Pattee and the Maltese cross, and at the center is the Latin cross. Binding the whole together is the circle. The outer cross has eight points, which stands for eight beatitudes. A Christian exemplifies these eight qualities in his life. The four wings of the outer represents the references in Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."¹

The inner, or Latin cross, is empty (as distinguished from the crucifix which includes the body of Christ) and symbolizes Christ's sacrifice and victory over death. The Fellowship worships a living Christ. As the Latin cross stands at the center of the emblem, so sacrificial service is supposed to be central in all that is done by the Methodist Youth Fellowship.²

The circle symbolizes world-wide fellowship with Christ and with one another.

The colors of the Methodist Youth Fellowship are blue and gold.

¹ _____, Handbook of the Methodist Youth Fellowship (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1953) p. 15.

² Ibid., p. 14.

The Motto. Methodist youth selected "Christ above all" as the motto of the Fellowship.³

The Benediction:

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you:

Group: The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you:

Leader and Group: The Lord lift up his countenance
upon you, and give you peace. Amen.
(Numbers 6:24-26)⁴

The Covenant. The distinctive meaning of the Methodist Youth Fellowship is set forth in the covenant, which becomes the declaration of faith or statement of purpose as one joins it.

It is our purpose in the Methodist Youth Fellowship:
to live clean lives following the highest that we know;
to give our loyalty and service through the Methodist
church of which we are a part, working with others that
she may more perfectly follow the Master and more worthily
bless mankind.

To hold the ideals of unselfish service ever before
us, striving continually for human betterment, placing
the welfare of others above our own; and in simple trust,
to follow Jesus as our Saviour and Lord.⁵

The Methodist Youth Fellowship has many branches of
service, both in and out side the local church. This study
dealt first with the departments in the local church that
make up the Fellowship.

THE INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT

The intermediates are boys and girls between the ages

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

of twelve and fourteen. The term Junior High is also used interchangeably with Intermediate.

To observe intermediates is to observe rapid growth. Picture a twelve year old, and then a fourteen year old. Many changes have taken place. The years between childhood and youth are termed intermediate. It is important that the church approach the intermediate with understanding and guide him with vision.

The intermediate has certain general characteristics peculiar to this stage of growth. They are no longer children - nor are they full-fledged youth. At one moment an intermediate may exhibit amazing maturity of thought. At another moment an impulsive reaction will reveal that he has not yet "put away childish things." Conscious of their growth and eager to be accepted by their fellows and their elders, they heartily dislike being considered children. Church leaders of intermediates seek to conserve values of the earlier training which the boys and girls have had as children and to build toward that which will come later.

THE CHURCH PROGRAM FOR INTERMEDIATES

In certain definite ways the church guides its boys and girls in Christian growth. These make up the "program". "Program" as used here means all the activities of a group through a period of time. The program for intermediates in-

cludes what takes place at Sunday school; afternoon or evening or weekday meetings; and all other meetings and activities.⁶ Parts of the program may take place at different meetings, but the program itself is autonomous. The program of the intermediate department is a part of the larger program of the youth division of the church school, and the church.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERS OF INTERMEDIATES

Leaders of intermediates should be mature adults. Many times young people are appointed to leadership in this department and not rightly so, for they themselves need further growth through study and activities in their own age-groups. By "mature adult" is not meant one who has forgotten what it was like to be an intermediate, but rather one who has lived long enough and abundantly enough to know how to meet trying situations with Christian poise, to meet questioning minds with resourcefulness, and to become for each boy and girl a friend.

Leaders of intermediates should be Christian persons who, through the winsomeness of their personalities, can make the Christian way of life attractive.

Leaders of intermediates should seek a growing understanding of the age group and its needs.

Leaders of intermediates should be faithful. So compelling should be their vision of their task that they will

not dare approach a group without careful preparation, or be absent or late without notice, or bring their boys and girls less than their best.

Leaders of intermediates should believe in the educational process.

Leaders of intermediates should understand the church program and their relationship to it.⁷

Leaders. Leaders in the intermediate department include: the pastor, the general Superintendent, the youth division superintendent, department counselor, teachers, advisers to officers and committees, the missionary adviser, the enrollment secretary, the pianist. Regular monthly meetings of this group should be held if at all possible.⁸

The function of the department staff is to keep an overview of the departmental work.

ORGANIZATION

It is the purpose of the church school in working with intermediates, to guide these boys and girls in Christian growth. The main concern is the lives of the individuals, rather than making the organization work, but organization is essential.

There are two plans of organization set up by the 1944 Methodist Discipline:

⁷ Bowman, op. cit., pp. 12-14.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 14-19.

Each department shall organize in accordance with one or the other of the two following plans (to be outlined fully by the General Board of Education) as may be determined by the membership concern and the church Board of Education.

a. Plan I. Where a unified organization is desired one organization, with one set of officers and one program-planning Department council, shall be responsible for carrying on all the activities of the department as outlined in 2 above.

b. Plan II. Where two or more correlated organizations are desired, they may be provided within the department to carry on activities as outlined in 2 above. Each may have its own officers, program committees, and separate membership. Suitable representatives from each organization within the department shall meet together as a department council monthly or as often as necessary to give such supervision over the programs of the organization concerned as shall avoid duplication and omissions and meet the total needs of the age group concerned. The department council shall represent the entire department in matters which concern that age group of the local church.⁹

Membership is in the department as a whole. A boy or girl does not join the Sunday School meetings and the evening or weekday meeting. He joins the fellowship and participates in the various activities. The roll is made up of the department as a whole, and not by different meetings, and subdivisions.

The motto, colors, benediction, covenants and emblem are the same for all three departments.

THE SENIOR AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

The Senior Department consists of boys and girls between the ages of fifteen and seventeen. The Young People's

⁹ Noland B. Harmon, (ed.), The Methodist Discipline, (The Methodist Publishing House, 1944) pp. 63-64.

Department consists of young men and women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three. These two departments may be organized separately or together depending on the size of the church. They may be organized either according to Plan I or Plan II.¹⁰ A good working principle is that as little time as possible be spent in separate organizations, so that more time may be spent in activities of Christian growth and service.

Plan I. With Plan I, there is only one department which includes all the activities of the group. There is one set of officers, and a Department Council responsible for the program as a whole; membership is in the department as a whole. One joins the group of Sunday School youth which functions as a class or department on Sunday morning and in other activities on Sunday evening and through the week.¹¹

The officers are: President (who by virtue of his office is a member of the Quarterly Conference and who should be a member of the Methodist Church), Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer (with combinations as desired) and such other officers as may be deemed necessary. There is to be a treasurer of the Methodist Youth Fund. Officers are elected annually.¹²

Under Plan II, within the department, the Sunday School group is a separate organization, the Sunday evening group is

¹⁰ Bowman, op. cit., p. 32.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 33.

¹² Ibid.

a separate organization, and other separate organizations may also exist. Membership is in each organization. Officers are elected separately for each organization as in Plan I.¹³

For both Plan I and Plan II there is a council. Under Plan I it is composed of the department officers, the chairman of the program committee, the chairmen and advisers of all commissions, the adult counselor, the pastor and the superintendent of the Youth Division. It may include Sunday school teachers in advisory capacity.¹⁴

In the Senior and Young People's Department the activities of the organization are carried on through four commissions; the Commission on Worship and Evangelism; Commission on World Friendship; Commission on Community Service; and Commission on Recreation and Leisure.¹⁵ The chairmen of the commissions are elected in the same manner as the principle officers. In smaller churches where the number does not warrant having four commissions, the program functions as a whole with all members participating in activities relating to those four areas.

The commission on Worship and Evangelism is responsible for the evangelistic outreach of the Methodist Youth

¹³ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "The Methodist Youth Fellowship" The Encyclopedia Americana, (New York: Americana Corporation, 1955), XVIII, 727.

Fellowship. In many groups the Weekend Christian Witness Mission is a definite plan of youth evangelism used in the annual conference, district, subdistrict, and local church. Through this program young people are given an opportunity to witness to unchurched youth, in intensive weekends of evangelism.¹⁶

The Methodist Youth Fellowship council, led by the chairman of Christian Witness Committee, and the adult counselors and teachers plan together, and name necessary temporary or subsidiary committees. Such committees may include: Prospects - prepare a prospect list of unchurched youth. Arrange names and addresses of the prospects and assign cards to visitation teams. These teams recruit and divide visitors into teams of two. Their work is carefully supervised.

Food - Committee plans for the group to be together in fellowship and training suppers. The committee on publicity uses bulletins, posters, letters, telephone calls and personal contacts. The Fellowship committee has song-fests, get-acquainted activities, and mixers for new-comers arranged and planned for Saturday evening and Sunday Methodist Youth Fellowship meetings.¹⁷

¹⁶ "Weekend Christian Witness Projects" (pamphlet, Nashville: Methodist Publishing House.)

¹⁷ Ibid.

For visiting, the teams are given minute instruction.

1. Pray before you call.
2. Introduce yourself clearly.
3. Early in the call indicate your purpose.
4. Guide the conversation.
5. Witness to your own faith.
6. Talk about the reasons why he should be a Christian.
7. Ask him to record his commitment.
8. Offer a prayer.
9. Relax and enjoy yourself.¹⁸

The World Friendship Commission controls the Missionary outreach of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. The primary missionary outreach is through the Methodist Youth Fund.

The Methodist Youth Fund is the fund through which members of the Methodist Youth Fellowship help in a program of missions, Christian education, and youth work around the world.

The Fund is appropriated in terms of cents.

- 67½ cents goes for missions.
- 47½ cents in woman's Division of Christian Service.
- 20 cents is used in a program of Christian education in Annual Conferences overseas and in home mission conferences.
- 32½ cents goes for youth work.¹⁹

The Methodist Youth Fund projects include: Christian Education, community centers, educational work, interdenominational work, medical work, rural work, social-evangelistic work and youth work of the Methodist Church.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Methodist Youth Fund" (Nashville: 1957) p. 5.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 10-27.

The commission on Community Service is not merely interested in delivering baskets to the needy. Ideally it is not the interest of the commission to do something merely because it is set up as an objective, but to serve humanity.²¹

Recreation has its own vital place in the program of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Planning for recreation is to be done as carefully and as thoroughly as planning for any other part of the program. The recreational program is not to be just a time consuming program, but to be planned in such a way as to fit into the ultimate aim of the movement. The missionary education adviser to the intermediate department, and the adviser to the Commission on World Friendship of the senior and young people's departments have opportunity to suggest interesting games of other lands, and recreational or hobby pursuits related to certain units of study and worship.²²

In senior and young people's departments, the youth themselves should assume the major responsibility for planning the recreational events; in intermediate departments, more of the responsibility rests upon the adult leaders.

TIMES OF WORSHIP

For youth in small churches as well as large ones, generally four types of worship are suggested:

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 92.

1. Devotional services, usually brief, in the age-group fellowship. A service should not be called devotional unless it is directed to bringing one to a deeper experience of fellowship with God.
2. Moments of worship, that should come occasionally in the midst of group discussion or other activities.
3. Participating in the worship life of the church as a whole, particularly on Sunday morning or in evening services of the congregation.
4. Habits of personal prayer and meditation.²³

BEYOND THE LOCAL CHURCH

The point of focus in all youth work is the local church. The local Methodist Youth Fellowship is the center of the youth program. In addition to an active local program, senior and older youth, as well as their adult leaders need activities beyond the local church. This is provided through the subdistrict, district, conference, jurisdiction or region, and nation.

The Intermediate program is planned only for the local church. Intermediates are holding offices for the first time, and making adjustments that do not require as varied a program. Preferably meetings beyond the local church level should not be held at any regular time - certainly not more often than once or twice a year. These should be planned in keeping with

²³ Ibid., pp. 99-102.

the ongoing program in the local church.²⁴

SENIORS

Seniors are ready for the wider connectional activities of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Beyond the local church activity should never become organized simply for itself alone, neither should it compete with the local church for the time and energies of seniors. Each level of activity must supplement the other to build a better youth program in each church and reach youth not already a part of the Fellowship.²⁵

OLDER YOUTH

Older youth beginning to face seriously the issues of their world see that their religion must be applied. Their needs and interest cannot be met by grouping them with high school youth for all of their activities.

In many annual conferences older youth assemblies, institutes, and camps are provided for inspiration and study. Activities beyond the local church should stimulate a separate program for their age group in local churches.²⁶

The Subdistrict Fellowship. A subdistrict Fellowship is made up of senior and older youth from several churches.

²⁴ _____, Handbook of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1953), p. 359.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 360-361.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 362.

In it there may be as few as four or five churches or as many as fifteen or twenty.

The subdistrict co-operates with the district staff of Christian education and with the conference board of education and the General Board of Education. The young people elect their own officers and adult counselor. The program is planned to stimulate interest in the local church and in each area.²⁷

The District Fellowship. The district fellowship is made up of representatives of senior and older youth from the churches of the district. In a district with active subdistricts there is no need for extensive organization. The district should serve as a link between the subdistrict and conference, with only the organization necessary for that purpose. The district superintendent and the district director of youth work serve as counselors.²⁸

The Annual Conference Fellowship. Young people (not including intermediates) from all churches in the conference are represented in the Annual Conference Fellowship. They elect officers who work with the executive secretary of the conference board of education and the conference director of youth work. This committee develops the conference program

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 363.

for youth. The official name is "The Conference Methodist Youth Fellowship." The youth of all the local churches within the bounds of the conference through their selected representatives make up the membership.

There is an annual meeting of the Conference Youth Fellowship at which time policy is outlined and adopted, the budget set up, special emphases and projects considered and planned. This group meets to evaluate the work being done, to set up certain emphases, and make definite plans to achieve the purposes argued upon, with responsibilities distinguished. The conference organization is to function vitally throughout the district and subdistrict to help youth of every local church carry on their work more effectively and to live better Christian lives.²⁹

The Jurisdiction Fellowship. Jurisdictional organizations exist in some sections of the church, and jurisdictional and regional conferences are held for the training of conference, district, and subdistrict officers. Also there are jurisdictional leadership schools held for training workers with youth.³⁰

The National Conference of Methodist Youth. The National Conference of Methodist Youth bring together annually the local church. Presidents of all annual conference Method-

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 363-364.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 364.

ist Youth Fellowships, and state presidents of the Methodist Student Movement, together with representatives from several general boards and commissions and representative adult workers from each jurisdiction.

The National Conference divides itself into two groups for a period of time - one group for general youth work and the other for student work. This provides opportunity for leaders of the whole nation to participate in making plans for the youth program of the total church.

The National Conference has no power over the youth and student organizations on the other levels. It does not promote a separate program. I works with the leaders on all organizational levels.³¹

The Joint Staff. The Joint Staff is made up of those on various boards and agencies responsible for the youth work of the whole church.. This staff meets once or twice a year to co-ordinate and plan for the total program of youth work.³²

Youth Work on the College Campus. Everything possible is done to help the college student continue to feel a part of the youth program of the church. The Methodist Student Movement is organized on church college campuses and the Wesley Foundation in state-supported schools. In its state and re-

³¹ Ibid., pp. 364-366.

³² Ibid., p. 366.

gional organizations the Methodist Student Movement is closely related to the Fellowship. Both the conference youth and student organization are represented on the conference board of education.³³

In connection with Methodist work among college youth, is a summer program called Methodist Youth Caravans. This is open only to college young people.

A typical Methodist Youth Caravan is made up of five persons: two young women, two young men and an adult counselor. They volunteer eight weeks of their summer to work with youth in local churches in discovering more effective ways of meeting the needs of youth through the Methodist Youth Fellowship.³⁴

The purpose of the caravan is to help strengthen and revitalize the youth program of the local church. In working with the Methodist Youth Fellowship the Caravan will help the group in developing new skills in group leadership, discussion leadership, program planning, recreation leadership, worship, and personal devotions. Also home visitation plans are worked out to win new members.³⁵

THE PROGRAM AREA

The work of the senior and older youth groups is

³³ Ibid., pp. 366-367.

³⁴ "Youth Caravans" Methodist Board of Education, p. 3.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

arranged for in five program areas: Christian Faith, Christian Witness, Christian Outreach, Christian Citizenship, and Christian Fellowship. The purpose of each area is: Christian Faith, to help youth grow in a vital Christian faith and life; Christian Witness, to help youth to make known to others the way of Christ; Christian Outreach to make known to youth the needs of the world and help them to accept their responsibility; Christian Citizenship, to present the needs of the community and to meet these needs through personal influence and action; Christian Fellowship to bring youth together in a Christian bond of fellowship.

CHAPTER V

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Through the years many changes have occurred in the youth organization of the Methodist Church. This chapter deals with changes in regards to aims.

The Methodist Alliance, the first youth organization of the Methodist church, grew out of a spirit of revival, where young people sought the blessing of "heart purity" at a Methodist campmeeting. The revival spirit spread until a number of young people had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. This brought them together with a vital interest in one another and other young people who had not received this blessing. The Alliance was formed as a means of maintaining spiritual fellowship from one campmeeting season to the next. Only those who were Christians and seeking the blessing of heart purity or had already professed to receiving it could be active members. The members pledged themselves to abstain from all questionable amusements, to observe periods of daily prayer and Bible study and to devote time daily to the purpose of soul winning. This pledge was not required of associate members.¹

The Oxford League was strongly denominational in its aim. It sought to help Methodist youth and to build up the

¹ Joseph F. Berry, Four Wonderful Years (New York; Hunt and Eaton, 1893) pp. 8-10.

It was primarily religious in its aim, though much emphasis was placed upon social development. It sought to develop the whole man by promoting Bible study for spiritual development; to broaden and enrich Christian personality by providing cultural influences and to encourage and assist young people in Christian service.²

The Young People's Christian League was organized with the thought of bringing about a spirit of cooperation among the already existing youth societies of the Methodist church. It required primary allegiance to the local church and through this it was believed that one central body would come into focus.

The Methodist Young People's Union grew out of a pastor's conference in the state of Michigan. It was organized with the aim of extending the social and religious culture of the young people.

The Methodist Episcopal Alliance was organized for the purpose of bringing unity among the youth societies of Methodism.

The Epworth League incorporated ideas from all five societies and proposed to cultivate Christian fellowship among young people; deepen their Christian experience through prayer, testimony, exhortation and personal evangelism; train them in

² Ibid., pp. 12-15.

the way of the church; lead them in the way of social and missionary service; and to supply the requirements of social and recreational life.

The League was to teach and to illustrate the vital doctrines and precepts of the Gospel such as Christian experience; repentance; faith; the witness of the Spirit; discipline of heart and mind; and dedication of self, time, and money, to God. The pledge to be taken by active members could be eliminated in those churches where it would be inapplicable because of the lack of Christian young people.

The Methodist Youth Fellowship set as their purpose to: live clean lives, each member following his highest ideals, give their loyalty and support to the Methodist church of which they are a part, working with others that she may more worthily follow the Master and more worthily bless mankind; to hold the ideals of unselfish service ever before them striving continually for human betterment, placing the welfare of others above their own; and in simple trust, follow Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

The Epworth League as has been noted, had three types of members, and only Christian young people could be active members, who voted and held offices.

The Methodist Youth Fellowship has only one type of member and that membership may be obtained by being a member of the Sunday school. No pledge is required for membership.

The Epworth League was organized by adults, and standards were set by them to which the youth should attain. The Methodist Youth Fellowship was guided by adults but the choice of standards and goals was left mostly to the youth.

Examination of these goals revealed a marked change in emphasis from that of the Methodist Alliance.

General culture, Christian service, ecclesiastical emphasis, church wide organization of youth, recreational and social life, and social service were included in the aims as the organization moved toward the contemporary Methodist Youth Fellowship type.

The emphasis upon youth setting its own standards and goals and seeking to be contemporary is a move away from the standards of the Alliance, into emphasis upon growth and social service.